

2026



BLOOMINGTON
DIAMOND SERVICE
AWARDS



**DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Bloomington - Minneapolis South
Grand Ballroom**

MAY 27, 2026





Bloomington

Minnesota Travel & Tourism

RECEPTION

4:30 P.M.

PROGRAM

5:30 P.M.

PRESENTATION OF FINALISTS

Bloomington Food Safety Awards

Hospitality Hall of Fame Awards

Spirit of Hospitality

Award Dinner

Diamond Service Awards

“Be Our Guest” Tribute to Nominees

EMCEES

Bonnie L. Carlson
President & CEO,
Bloomington Minnesota
Travel & Tourism

Jim Cunningham
Actor, Playwright, and Producer



BLOOMINGTON DIAMOND SERVICE AWARDS

THE PROCESS

Diamond Service Award nominations are submitted by management personnel from the hospitality and retail businesses in Bloomington in 14 categories. All nominees are personally interviewed by a panel of independent judges and rated on a point system to determine final scores. The accounting firm Abdo verifies all tabulations and results.



WELCOME

Welcome to the 28th Annual Bloomington Diamond Service Awards!

Tonight, we come together to celebrate the people who define hospitality in Bloomington—the individuals whose dedication, care, and professionalism shape every visitor experience and keep our city moving forward.

In a year that brought both challenges and change across our region, Bloomington and the greater Twin Cities have shown what it truly means to persevere. While recent events momentarily tested our industry, they also underscored its strength. Our hospitality community adapted, supported one another, and continued to show up for guests with the same warmth and excellence that define this destination.

That spirit is what makes Bloomington stand apart. As the gateway to the Twin Cities, our city continues to evolve—welcoming millions of visitors each year with a dynamic mix of world-class attractions, natural beauty, and unmatched accessibility. From the iconic Mall of America to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and from major events to everyday moments of connection, Bloomington remains a place where experiences are not only delivered—but remembered.

Behind it all are the people we honor tonight. Across nearly 50 hotels and countless restaurants, venues, and attractions, our hospitality professionals bring this destination to life. Their commitment to service, attention to detail, and ability to create meaningful experiences are what keep visitors returning year after year.

As we celebrate our 28th year, we also look ahead—with confidence, momentum, and a shared commitment to continued growth. The future of Bloomington’s hospitality industry is bright because of you.

Congratulations to all of tonight’s nominees and honorees. Thank you for your dedication, your resilience, and for everything you do to make Bloomington a welcoming destination for all.



BONNIE L. CARLSON

*President & CEO
Bloomington Minnesota
Travel & Tourism*



FINALISTS

BLOOMINGTON FOOD SAFETY AWARDS

Great food brings people together—but behind every meal is a commitment to doing things right. Each year, Bloomington recognizes restaurants and food establishments that go above and beyond to ensure the highest standards of safety, cleanliness, and care.

Nominated by health inspectors and scored interviews evaluated by the Bloomington Advisory Board of Health, these finalists represent the best in food safety across the community. Their dedication doesn't just meet expectations—it builds trust, ensuring every meal can be enjoyed with confidence.

Join us in celebrating this year's standout establishments and the teams behind them.

Congratulations to the following businesses!

RETAIL GROCERY

Cub Foods (France)
Cub Foods (Lyndale)
Lunds & Byerlys

LIMITED SERVICE

Capital One Café
Country Inn & Suites by
Radisson, Bloomington at
Mall of America
Papa John's

QUICK SERVICE & CAFETERIA

Bruegger's Bagels (Southtown)
Bussin Birria Tacos
Chick-fil-A Bloomington
Naf Naf Grill
Subway #3796 (Lyndale)
Subway #12194 (Portland)

FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT

Applebee's (Southtown)
Red Lobster
WhirlyBall

FULL SERVICE HOTEL

DoubleTree by Hilton
Hotel Bloomington -
Minneapolis South
Hyatt Regency
Bloomington/Minneapolis



PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

Airport Foundation MSP
2025

Minnesota Sports and Events
2024

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senate, 2023

US Foods
2020

**Minnesota Super Bowl LII
Host Committee**
2019

Larry Lee
City of Bloomington, 2018

Bloomington Police Department
2017

Jim Saccoman
Embassy Suites Bloomington, 2016

Gene Winstead
Mayor of Bloomington, 2015

David Fong Family
David Fong's, 2014

Bruce Karstadt
American Swedish Institute, 2013

Steve Fox
Greenspring Media, 2012

Mall of America*
2011

Minnesota Zoo
2010

Rep. Jim M. Ramstad
U.S. House of Representatives, 2009

Jeffrey Hamiel
Metropolitan Airports Commission,
2008

Sen. William H. Belanger
Minnesota Legislature, 2007

Bonnie L. Carlson
Bloomington Convention & Visitors
Bureau, 2006

Sam Thompson
metroConnections, 2005

John Edman
MN Office of Tourism, 2004

Richard Anderson
Northwest Airlines, 2003

Governor Jesse Ventura
State of Minnesota, 2002

Marilyn Carlson Nelson
Carlson Cos., 2001

Gary L. Gandrud
Faegre & Benson, 2000

2026

SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY



Greenspring Media has been honored with this year's prestigious Spirit of Hospitality Award, recognizing its enduring role in shaping how Minnesota is experienced, celebrated, and shared. As a leading media company rooted in the Twin Cities, Greenspring has spent nearly six decades telling the stories that define this region—from its vibrant dining scene and cultural institutions to its destinations, businesses, and communities.

Through publications like *Minnesota Monthly* and a vast portfolio spanning both business-to-consumer and business-to-business platforms, Greenspring Media has become a trusted voice across hospitality, travel, group tourism, meetings and events, and more. Central to that impact is its longstanding partnership with Bloomington Minnesota Travel & Tourism and Mall of America, producing the official visitors guide for decades. This collaboration has helped promote Bloomington as a premier destination, connecting millions of visitors to the experiences, attractions, and businesses that define our area.

With a focus on both print, digital, and event platforms, the organization continues to evolve alongside the changing media landscape. Its integrated approach—combining editorial excellence, strategic partnerships, and data-driven insights—ensures that Minnesota's stories reach audiences in meaningful and impactful ways. From large-scale events like the Food & Wine Experience and GrillFest to targeted campaigns that support tourism partners, Greenspring consistently brings energy and visibility to the state's hospitality industry.

At its core, Greenspring Media's work reflects a deep commitment to community. Its partnerships across the region help amplify local initiatives while strengthening the connection between visitors and place. By showcasing what's new, noteworthy, and distinctly Minnesotan, Greenspring helps shape the narrative of the state for both residents and travelers alike.

Receiving the Spirit of Hospitality Award is a testament to Greenspring Media's impact on Minnesota's tourism and hospitality landscape. Through storytelling, collaboration, and a continued investment in local voices, the organization remains dedicated to promoting the experiences that make this region welcoming and memorable. To learn more about Greenspring Media, visit greenspring.com. Congratulations, Greenspring Media!

PHOTO: DARIN KAMNETZ



2026

HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME

The Diamond Service Awards Committee is proud to announce the 2026 inductees into the Hospitality Hall of Fame, recognizing dedication and longevity within Bloomington's tourism and hospitality industry.



38 YEARS OF SERVICE

DAN BALLSTADT

*Banquet Captain • Embassy Suites by Hilton
Minneapolis Bloomington Edina*

With more than 38 years at Embassy Suites Bloomington/Minneapolis, Dan Ballstadt has built a legacy of excellence in the banquet department, consistently delivering exceptional food and beverage service for events of every size. Known for his attention to detail and calm, solutions-focused approach, he ensures each experience runs seamlessly from start to finish. Dan's dedication extends beyond operations—his leadership by example and genuine care for guests have earned him multiple Employee of the Year honors and lasting loyalty from returning visitors. A true embodiment of hospitality, Dan sets the standard for service and remains a valued ambassador for both the hotel and the Bloomington community.



30 YEARS OF SERVICE

MIKE TVRDIK

*Former Vice President of Partnership Sales •
Mall of America*

Mike Tvrdik, former Vice President of Partnership Sales at Mall of America, spent 30 years helping shape the destination's global reach through group sales, tourism partnerships, and sponsorships. Known for his people-first approach, Mike built lasting relationships and made every guest feel welcomed and valued. His leadership—grounded in positivity, generosity, and genuine connection—set a standard for hospitality embraced across the industry. Deeply committed to the Bloomington community, he supported organizations like Special Olympics and served on the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce Board. Mike's legacy lives on through the countless relationships he built and the lasting impact he made on colleagues, partners, and visitors alike.



38 YEARS OF SERVICE

DEANNA ROCKSTED

*Restaurant Server • DoubleTree by Hilton
Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South*

A familiar and welcoming presence for more than 37 years, Deanna Rocksted has become an integral part of the DoubleTree Bloomington experience. Throughout her tenure—spanning roles from restaurant supervisor to room service and banquet server—she has consistently delivered exceptional service with warmth and care. Today, as part of the morning restaurant and banquet teams, she's known for her genuine connections with guests, many of whom seek her out to start their day. With an infectious laugh and a natural gift for hospitality, Deanna creates an atmosphere that feels both personal and memorable, embodying the spirit of service that defines Bloomington's hospitality community.



37 YEARS OF SERVICE

GUILLERMO "BILL" ZAMITIZ

*Banquet Captain • Sheraton
Bloomington Hotel*

With a hospitality career in Bloomington spanning more than three decades, Guillermo "Bill" Zamitiz has become a respected leader in banquet service across the city's hotel community. Since 1989, he has served as a Banquet Captain at several properties, including the Registry/DoubleTree Bloomington Minneapolis Airport, Park Plaza Hotel, and now the Sheraton Bloomington, while maintaining longstanding ties to DoubleTree Bloomington Minneapolis South. Known for his high standards and consistency, Bill delivers seamless, memorable events and has earned praise from guests and colleagues alike. His dedication, mentorship, and pride in every property he serves reflect a level of professionalism that continues to define Bloomington's hospitality industry.

PREVIOUS INDUCTEES

Jodie Grannes (2025)
Cambria Hotel Bloomington Mall of America Minneapolis Airport

Wanda Novak (2025)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Allen Plante (2025)
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Kim Vo (2025)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Eric Baker (2024)
Hilton Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport

Luis Blanco (2024)
Hyatt Place Minneapolis Airport-South

Rodney Fors (2024)
Crowne Plaza Bloomington

Kevin Westlund (2024)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Carol Chapman (2023)
Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America

Maria Peña (2023)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

James Rasmussen (2023)
Bloomington Event Center (Knights of Columbus)

Neil Rivard (2023)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Michael "Mick" Elder (2020)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Dawn Freid (2020)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Barbara Phillips (2020)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Kathy Sar (2020)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Tairie Starr (2020)
Chapel of Love

Sally Hanson, Sandy Moe, Susie Rudenick (2019)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Judy Nieto (2019)
Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America

Ismael Zavala (2019)
Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bloomington Minneapolis Airport Area West

Champawatee "Bobzin" Beni (2018)
Courtyard Bloomington by Mall of America

Patricia Bymark (2018)
Minneapolis Airport Marrio

Tim Krenik (2018)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Isabel Rodriguez (2018)
Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bloomington Minneapolis Airport Area West

Dwight Stewart (2018)
Crowne Plaza Bloomington MSP Airport/Mall of America

Jackie Ploen (2017)
Embassy Suites by Hilton Bloomington

Carrie Poepping (2017)
Country Inn & Suites by Carlson Bloomington at Mall of America

Michele Robidoux (2017)
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Sai Rosser-Ichisumi (2017)
Crowne Plaza Bloomington MSP Airport/Mall of America

John Dainty (2016)
Thunderbird/Ramada Hotel

Marlene Kurtz (2016)
Crowne Plaza Bloomington

Mary Jo Peterson (2016)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Mildret "Millie" Phillipp (2016)
Mall of America

Sohrab "Sammy" Sadeh (2016)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Ursula Chan (2015)
Colette Bar and Bistro

Mike Gruebele (2015)
Embassy Suites by Hilton Bloomington

Sue Miller (2015)
Woolley's Restaurant

Linda Fleming (2014)
Quality Inn & Suites Airport

Terry Jagow (2014)
DoubleTrees by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South

Mohammed Raki (2013)
Sofitel Minneapolis Bloomington

Joseph Skluzacek (2012)
Thunderbird/Ramada Hotel

Peggy Gaughran Werdan (2011)
Thunderbird/Ramada Hotel

SPRIT OF HOSPITALITY • HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME



2026

DIAMOND SERVICE AWARDS

BEST HOSPITALITY ADMINISTRATION

Augustine Neto
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Danielle Norring
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Steve Ploog
DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Jessica Sanchez
Courtyard by Marriott Bloomington
by Mall of America

Joce Streissguth
Smack Shack

BEST BANQUET/CATERING PERSONNEL

Kelly Ekerholm
Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington Hotel

Ann Krieg
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Domingo Lopez-Cruz
DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Norma Moreno
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Renee Pendzimas
Radisson Blu Mall of America

BEST GUEST RELATIONS PERSONNEL

Ciara Graham
Courtyard by Marriott Edina Bloomington

Salmaan Mohamud
Great Wolf Lodge Minneapolis/Bloomington

Pete Newburg
SEA LIFE Mall of America

Jennifer Rivers
SEA LIFE Mall of America

Ouijdane Young
Hilton Garden Inn Minneapolis Airport
Mall of America

BEST HOTEL GUEST SERVICES (LIMITED SERVICE)

Eren Aguilera
Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
Bloomington Mall of America

Mary Hall
Courtyard by Marriott Bloomington
by Mall of America

Jeanetta Lindo
Hilton Garden Inn Minneapolis Airport
Mall of America

Kateryn I. Lopez-Mendoza
Residence Inn by Marriott Bloomington
by Mall of America

Nicole Vibar
Element Bloomington Mall of America

BEST RESTAURANT PERSONNEL

Carlos De Jesus Beltron Sandoval
Hazelwood Food + Drink Bloomington

Carmen Flores
Bloomington Culver's

Ashley Hull
Smack Shack

Mario Martinez
Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville

Dylann Ward
Hazelwood Food + Drink Bloomington

BEST HOTEL GUEST SERVICES (FULL SERVICE)

Marisol BlasPalma
Great Wolf Lodge Minneapolis/Bloomington

Devyn Lennex
Hyatt Regency Bloomington/Minneapolis

Ha Nguyen
DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Madeline Riley
Radisson Blu Mall of America

Abigail Trenholm
Embassy Suites by Hilton Minneapolis Airport

Bloomington Minnesota
Travel & Tourism
2131 Lindau Lane, Suite 420
Bloomington, MN 55425

952-858-8500
BloomingtonMN.org


BloomingtonMinnesota


@BloomingtonMN


@BloomingtonMN


@BloomingtonMN

#BloomingtonDSA
#BloomingtonMN

**BEST HOUSEKEEPING PERSONNEL
(LIMITED SERVICE)****Maria Artola**

Courtyard by Marriott Bloomington
by Mall of America

Norma Lezama Garzon

Courtyard by Marriott Edina Bloomington

Jhonatan Martinez Castillo

Element Bloomington Mall of America

Rohanie Sook

Homewood Suites by Hilton Minneapolis/
Mall of America

Abiye Tola

Fairfield Inn & Suites Minneapolis
Bloomington/Mall of America

**BEST HOUSEKEEPING PERSONNEL
(FULL SERVICE)****Kannika Carson**

Radisson Blu Mall of America

Jahosca Flores Espinoza

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Minneapolis Airport

Sandra Guaman

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Minneapolis Airport

Diana Lamas Garcia

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Carolina Romero

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

**BEST HOTEL RESTAURANT
PERSONNEL****Zech Carlson**

Hyatt Regency Bloomington/Minneapolis

Angel Lopez Ramirez

Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington Hotel

Mizanur Rahaman

Radisson Blu Mall of America

Ryan Reiersgaard

Hyatt Regency Bloomington/Minneapolis

Virginia Reyes

Radisson Blu Mall of America

**BEST FOOD PRODUCTION
PERSONNEL****Chris Cordova**

Cambria Hotel Bloomington Mall of America
Minneapolis Airport

Maria Gutierrez-Barraza

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Susan Moore

Home2 Suites by Hilton Minneapolis
Bloomington

Trinidad Ponce

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Armando Raymundo Campos

Embassy Suites by Hilton Minneapolis
Bloomington Edina

**BEST TRANSPORTATION
PERSONNEL****Brittany Bentley**

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Salena Jeanson

Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
Bloomington Mall of America

Bill McCarthy

Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington Hotel

Mark Nordstrom

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Minneapolis Airport

David Quinn

Cambria Hotel Bloomington Mall of America
Minneapolis Airport

**BEST ENGINEER/MAINTENANCE
PERSONNEL****Ricky Acosta Cervantes**

Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington Hotel

Daniel Bautista Rivas

Element Bloomington Mall of America

Malcolm Franklin

Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
Bloomington Mall of America

Aaron Raschke

Hyatt Regency Bloomington/Minneapolis

Willyanis Rodriguez

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Minneapolis Airport

BEST RETAIL PERSONNEL**Ashuwanda Allen**

Great Wolf Lodge Minneapolis/
Bloomington

Danny Gleason

Mall of America

Sosena Haile

Mall of America

Rolanda Roper

M&M's Mall of America

Samuel Woldegiorgis

Ridemakerz

BEST BARTENDER**Santiago Bravo Cruz**

Cantina Laredo

Travis Hanson

Radisson Blu Mall of America

Chris Quarfoth

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

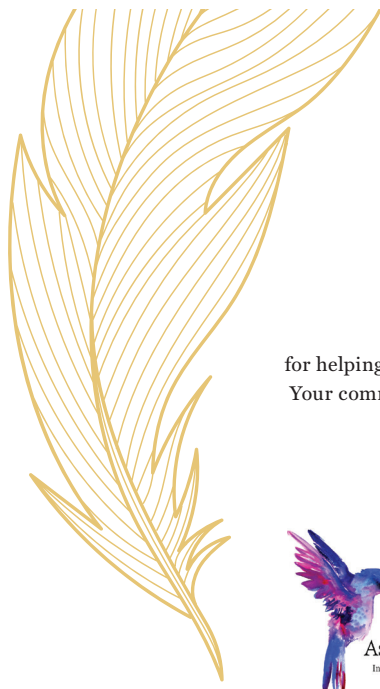
Marta Swenson

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington -
Minneapolis South

Anita Teuam

AC Hotel Bloomington Mall of America





THANK YOU

for helping Bloomington Minnesota Travel & Tourism bring this incredible program to life. Your commitment to exceptional customer service is as evident as those we honor tonight.

PLATINUM SPONSORS



GALA SPONSORS



DIAMOND SPONSORS



BEVERAGE SPONSORS



CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS



Bloomington
Minnesota Travel & Tourism